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Safety Awareness for responders to Emergency Operations: Disaster Zone Defensive Driving

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Objectives

- Characteristics of a Defensive Driver
- Rental Vehicle Awareness
- Types of Driving Conditions
- Disaster Driving Tips
- Hazardous Driving Examples
- Road Rage
- Summary

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The Defensive Driver

- Prepares before getting behind the wheel
- Ensures all passengers use safety belts
- Obeys speed limits
- Considers weather conditions

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The Defensive Driver

- Never tailgates
- Eliminates distractions
- Adjusts for city, highway, or rural driving

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Steps to Safer Driving

- Plan your trip
- Know your vehicle
- Keep gas tank at least ½ full
- Maintain control
- Remember defensive driving techniques

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Rental Vehicles

- Familiarize yourself
  - With the vehicle
  - With your surroundings
  - Know where you are going before you leave the parking lot

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Driving Laws

- Observe Speed limits
  - Drive for road conditions
  - Drive for traffic conditions
- Obey Traffic laws
  - Right turn on red?
- Use your turn signal

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Driving Conditions

- Severe Weather
  - Know if flash floods are a potential
  - Listen to weather forecasts
  - NEVER, NEVER drive through running water
  - Water only 1 ft deep can carry your car away
  - Tornado potential

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Driving Conditions

- Night Time driving
  - Time change causes drivers to leave work after dark
  - Work zone areas still in effect until dusk
- Fog
  - Fog and smoke from burning debris can cause limited visibility

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Terrain

- Know the terrain
  - Narrow, hilly roads
  - Road surface
  - Congested city streets
  - RR crossings without lights or gates

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Watch out for

- Pedestrians
- Children
- Animals
- Bad Drivers
- Trucks

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Disaster Driving Tips to Live By

- Slow Down
- Wear Seat Belts
- Expect Delays
- Avoid distractions

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Disaster Driving Tips to Live By

Allowing Yourself Space

Increase the distance between your car and others due to increased hazards of the road

- Debris, work zones, stop light damage, stress levels

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6 Second Rule

Hurricane Devastated Areas should use 6-second rule instead of 3-second rule.

Three Second Rule		Safe Interval Should Be>	3 seconds	6 seconds
Speed	**Distance Traveled**	**For these conditions>**	**Good**	**Marginal**
25 m.p.h.	37 ft. per second		111 ft.	222 ft.
35 m.p.h.	52 ft. per second		166 ft.	312 ft.
45 m.p.h.	66 ft. per second		198 ft.	396 ft.
55 m.p.h.	81 ft. per second		243 ft.	486 ft.
65 m.p.h.	96 ft. per second		288 ft.	576 ft.
75 m.p.h.	111 ft. per second		333 ft.	666 ft.

Safe follow distance

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Disaster Driving Tips to Live By

- Treat all intersections as 4 - way stops
- Some traffic lights may not be working
- Signs may be missing

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Disaster Driving Tips to Live By

- Scan the horizon.
- Keep you eyes moving.
- Scan on and off the road.
- Check your mirrors frequently.
- Be totally aware of what is in front and behind you at all times.

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Vehicles may pass unexpectedly at any time

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Roadway work zones are frequently not marked or properly identified with signs, cones, barricades and trained flaggers

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Flaggers in Work Zones are not always visible

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Stay back 4 Car lengths distance from debris trucks to avoid flying and falling debris

Be aware of oversized vehicles, mobile homes, and heavy equipment

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Road Rage

Road rage (also road violence) is the informal name for deliberately dangerous and/or violent behavior under the influence of heightened, violent emotion such as anger and frustration, involving an automobile in use.

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Causes of Road Rage

- Environment
- Instructive responses
- Territorial defensiveness

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10 Useful Tips

1. **Don't** retaliate.
2. **Don't** make eye contact with an angry driver.
3. **Before** you react to anything that is done to you please ask yourself, "Is getting back at that jerk worth my life?"
4. **Be** polite and courteous, even when others are not.
5. **Always** ask yourself: "Could the other driver have possibly made a mistake?"

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10 Useful Tips

6. **If** you are harassed by another driver and being followed, do not go home. Go to the nearest police detachment.
7. **Slow** down and relax!
8. **Never** underestimate other drivers' capacity for mayhem.
9. **Reduce** your driving stress by allowing enough time to get where you are going.
10. **Remember** that you cannot control the drivers around you, but you can control the way they affect your well-being.

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Drivers are stressed, be patient

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Summary

- Your safety is your responsibility
- Drive cautiously and carefully
- Be aware of surrounding
- Be patient with disaster area
- Watch out for hazards